

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 21, 2003

## ***Co-Sponsor the MEDIA (Maintaining and Ensuring Diversity and Integrity on the Airwaves) Act of 2003***

Dear Colleague:

In just two short weeks, the FCC is planning to significantly relax some of its media ownership rules. Specifically, the FCC is planning to permit networks to own stations that can reach 90% of the nation, allow companies to own three television stations in a market, and abolish the ban on cross-ownership between TV stations and newspapers.

Amazingly, the FCC is doing this at a time when the media business is already incredibly concentrated. Today, **five conglomerates control two-thirds of the programming on prime time TV and the biggest 25 companies own more than 44% of all broadcast stations.**

This massive media consolidation has had a devastating impact on minorities. **Minority broadcasters own less than 4% of radio stations and less than 2% of the full power TV stations. This translates into fewer job opportunities for minorities and little media attention to minority issues.**

You'd think that with these dismal numbers and the FCC's stated commitment to promoting diversity in broadcast ownership, the FCC would take the time to analyze the impact that any change of its ownership rules may have on minorities and diversity in the media.

This has not happened.

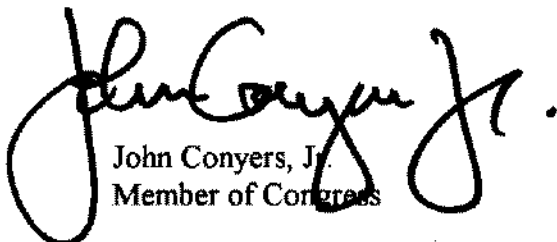
**In making its decision to revise the media ownership rules, the FCC has taken no time to demonstrate how changes in media ownership rules will affect minority ownership and representation and benefit the public interest.**

It is time for Congress to step in to ensure that the FCC performs the function of ensuring minority participation in the media. The bill we are introducing accomplishes this goal.

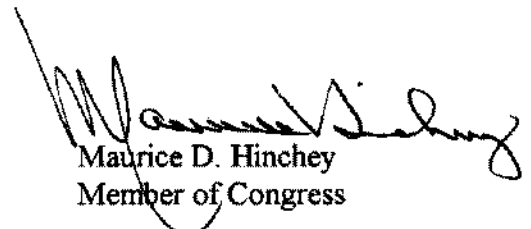
- It responds to the most blatant abuses that have come to light concerning the FCC's regulatory process by preventing agencies from revising their regulations without first soliciting public comment on the proposed change—as they have done in this case.
- It requires the FCC to review its media ownership rules every five years rather than every two years. Requiring a biennial review places an undue burden on the FCC as well as the many small and minority owned companies who need greater certainty to grow their businesses.
- It prevents the FCC from repealing its media concentration rules or approving mergers in excess of \$50 million until it has completed a required report to Congress identifying and eliminating market entry barriers for small telecommunications businesses. It only makes good sense to make sure this such a review is done before we permit further media consolidation through rule or merger.

We urge you to join us on this legislation to ensure that the FCC takes into account minority interests in media ownership. Please contact Stacey Dansky (5-6906) by 11:00 a.m. on Friday, May 23rd, if you would like more information or would like to be an original cosponsor.

Sincerely,



John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Maurice D. Hinchey  
Member of Congress